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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and apparatus for electronic archiving of a data stream that has both text and graphics includes separating form data that stays the same from document to document from variable data that varies from document to document. The form data is treated differently in the archiving process from the variable data. For example, only one copy of the form data need be stored, while the smaller data files of the variable data occupy less storage space. Index data is generated to facilitate overlay of the form data and variable data to permit recreation of the original documents. The data is converted into a printer-specific data format to facilitate separation into the different data types.